

WORKSHOP 2.2

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS: FOREST ENTOMOLOGY AND BEYOND

MODERATORS:

B. Strom, *US Forest Service, Pineville, Louisiana*
L.K. Rieske-Kinney, *University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky*

Public-Private Partnerships: Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Conscience, or Symbiosis

L.K. Rieske-Kinney, *University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky*
B. Strom, *US Forest Service, Pineville, Louisiana*
R. Harrison, *University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta*
K.M. Clancy, *US Forest Service, Flagstaff, Arizona*
J.R. Spence and J. Welchman, *University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta*

Joint efforts among government, university and private enterprises are common in natural resources fields. Public-private partnerships are a natural response to declining public resources and for addressing the administrative and marketing concerns for products designed for environmental management. While **increasing** emphasis has been placed on the development of cooperative ventures, comparatively little has been done to educate individuals about the ethical dimensions of such ventures.

United States legislation emphasizing the development of public-private partnerships has successfully accelerated transfer of scientific discoveries into the marketplace, and allowed for the establishment of cooperative research agreements between public and private entities. Consequences of this success include the entanglement of university research with private industry and a blurring of boundaries between academic and corporate interests. Scientific tradition calls for openness and free exchange of ideas; proprietary interests often call for restricted access to research information and products. Pressures that arise may include conflicts of interest, effort, and conscience. Any or all of these can reduce the quality of research and delay or prohibit their publication.

Most research universities have an industry liaison office that facilitates technology transfer by helping establish and monitor

industry/university partnerships. These offices offer expertise in forming partnerships to develop research products for the marketplace, while ensuring that public interests are protected. Such partnerships may take the form of grants, contracts, joint ventures, etc. Ethical responsibilities of the Industry Liaison Office include managing conflicts of interest and ownership and use of intellectual property. Balancing a university's need for private funding and expertise with the obligation to best serve public interests is critical to the success of joint ventures.

Research administrators and journal editors can promote ethical behavior of professional scientists. Public agencies and professional societies have Codes of Ethics and/or Conduct that stress reporting research results openly, honestly, with full recognition to contributors, and with full disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest. Administrators should be cognizant of these and establish enforceable policies that reflect ethical considerations. Editors are the gatekeepers of scientific information exchange, and may effect ethical decision-making through proactive use of their status.

Despite the challenges, public-private partnerships often succeed in producing fruitful projects that would be impossible without the partnership. A large scale, long-term research study that examines ecological responses to forest

management in Alberta has successfully incorporated industry, government, and university concerns into a common project. Careful interactive planning that identifies common objectives while maintaining an open and honest dialogue among participants has been the key to the project's success.

In forming public-private partnerships, it is imperative to recognize that each member has his or her own background, viewpoint, and goals that

may form a unique set of acceptable ethical behaviors and expected outcomes. Recognizing these differences and maintaining open lines of communication throughout the process are essential steps in minimizing conflicts and maximizing the benefits of public-private partnerships.

Development of Environmental Research Collaborations with Industry: an Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure

J.R. Spence, *University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta*
W.J.A. Volney, *Canadian Forest Service, Edmonton, Alberta*

We review the development of the EMEND project (Ecosystem Management by Emulating Natural Disturbance), a large-scale wildfire versus harvest comparison located in Northwestern Alberta. Key to the success of this project has been the active involvement of industrial foresters from the start. We used formal structures to ensure that they had formative input

into the development of the science behind EMEND. In such an environment, scientists can achieve their research goals while at the same time facilitate a very clear understanding of what research can and cannot do to meet the challenges faced by industry. Communication reduces potential conflict that can result from insufficient understanding of mutual goals.

BOREAL ODYSSEY:

**Proceedings of
the North American Forest
Insect Work Conference
May 14-18, 2001
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada**

W.J.A. Volney, J.R. Spence, and E.M. Lefebvre, editors

INFORMATION REPORT NOR-X-381

**Canadian Forest Service
Northern Forestry Centre
2001**